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AUTHOR	Melton, Dale H.
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ABSTRACT

Developed out of a recognized need for practical, career-related suggestions, this booklet was designed for parents to use with their children. Eight major subtopics considered important by career educators are used to group the information: (1) Career awareness, (2) attitudes and appreciations, (3) self-awareness, (4) decision-making, (5) economic awareness, (6) education awareness, (7) employability skills, and (8) beginning competency. Within each section are statements on career education followed by suggestions to parents for enhancing their child's career development. The statements and suggestions are representative of those contained in the professional literature on career education and career development. Although each item is placed in only one of eight categories, most contribute to two or more of them. The placement was arbitrary in order to avoid repetition, and also because of space limitations. (TA)

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CAREER AND EDUCATION YOUR CHILD

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

by

Dale H. Melton

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The State of Florida's
Career Education Consortium
Manatee Junior College
P.O. Box 1849
Bradenton, FL 33506

(813) 755-1511

Dr. Virginia Bert, Project Director
Dr. James W. Selman, Project Manager

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The author, Dr. Dale H. Melton, is curriculum specialist of the Career Education Consortium. He is the father of two children, ages 11 and 14.

CREDITS

The author appreciates the assistance of the following persons:

Reviewers

June Barber, parent-educator
Virginia Brady, guidance counselor, elementary school level
Dana Foerster, parent, career education specialist, elementary school level
Jim Kershaw, guidance specialist, K-12
Shirley Melton, parent-educator
Anita Swatzell, parent, career education specialist, middle school level
Dr. P. C. Wu, parent, curriculum specialist, K-12

Typist

Norma Rowan

Cover

Tom Smith

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Introduction

This booklet was developed because of a recognized need for practical, career related suggestions for parents to use with their children. Eight major sub-topics considered important by career educators are used to group the information: (1) career awareness, (2) attitudes and appreciations, (3) self awareness, (4) decision making, (5) economic awareness, (6) education awareness, (7) employability skills, and (8) beginning competency. Within each section are statements on career education followed by suggestions to parents for enhancing their child's career development. The statements and suggestions are representative of those contained in the professional literature on career education and career development. Although each item is placed in only one of eight categories, most contribute to two or more of them. The placement was arbitrary because of space limitations and to avoid repetition.

The importance of the role of the parent as educator is generally accepted as noted by the following quotes from educational literature:

> "Few would doubt that parents exercise the greatest single influence upon educational and career choices of their children. Yet, though most parents are aware of their responsibilities to their children they have little concept of how they can aid in their children's career development."[4]

"The home environment is the foundation for the development of fundamental values, attitudes, and skills which are the central factors of career success. The influence of the school and society on the child is infintesimal in comparison to the home influence during the first five to eight years of life. If a child has had an unfortunate beginning, he can have attitudes altered; but this is a process that could take a lifetime."[4]

"Educating for vocational development will never be the exclusive job of any one person or agency. Each of us must share the responsibility, and the part played by the parent may be the most important of all."[6]

"Until and unless parents become partners in career education, the school system's efforts are unlikely to be very successful."[3]

"(I)ts (home) influence far outweight that of the school."[9]

The author who is a parent and educator recommends these suggestions to parents. He believes strongly, as do other professional educators, that parents can become more effective resources to and teachers of their children in the area of career development. Therefore, the suggestions provided are designed not as ends in themselves, but as means to inform, stimulate thought, and encourage parents to seek to become more effective in this important role.

One final word--career education is a joint effort: home, school, community-at-large. Parents inspired by this booklet are encouraged further to talk with principals, counselors, teachers, and other school personnel involved in career education to learn about other ways in which they can join efforts and, thereby, make their own unique contributions to the career education activities of the school.

Career Awareness*

1. During the fantasy or growth stage of career exploration (birth to age fourteen), a child sees himself/herself as various workers, believing that he/she can become whatever is desired. The fantasy jobs are a means for increasing a child's awareness of a variety of occupations, as well as a starting place for learning about related jobs.

    a. Encourage your child to explore his/her environment by providing home talks related to jobs he/she shows interest in and those actually done.

    b. Answer your child's questions and arouse his/her curiosity.

2. Children possess a natural curiosity for learning, in general, and for learning about the jobs of others, in particular.

    a. Capitalize on this curiosity by showing your child things you make and ways in which you make them. (Bring things home from your work for your child (drawings, products, etc.) Discuss how the things you make are used by others.

    b. Take your child to your job location and to other places where things of interest to them are being manufactured, assembled, fabricated, or distributed.

3. People work for several different purposes: pay, service to others, and avocation, coupled with leisure.

a. Point out to your child the volunteer workers you encounter; service persons (repair, maintenance, etc.), public servants, and others who work for pay; and neighbors and relatives who grow vegetables or flowers or make items for pleasure (possibly for profit as well).

b. Discuss each group of workers noted above.

4. Many career fields previously closed to either men or women are now open or opening.

   a. Point out/discuss new opportunities and changes in occupational areas, such as women in management and male nurses. Compare with the "old days."

   b. Discuss occupations of an unusual nature held by relatives, friends, and neighbors, e.g. men who sew (tailors) and cook (chefs) and women as construction workers, ministers, lawyers, and politicians.

5. Play and work are complementary activities.

   a. Encourage the development of your child's hobbies, assisting him/her when requested. Place your child in contact with others, particularly relatives, neighbors, and close friends.

   b. Look for natural opportunities to show your child ways in which people turn interests and hobbies into profitable jobs. Discuss how work can be "play" to those who are interested in and enjoy their "work."

Let children see you doing hobbies, such as art, ceramics, or wood carvings, which can be sold or given as gifts. Relate these activities to the work of others. For example, if your play is ceramics, take your child to a ceramics shop to compare their work with yours.

6. A child's knowledge of a wide spectrum of occupational and educational choices is important in facilitating growth toward his/her career maturity.

   a. Encourage your child to work as volunteer, hold part-time jobs, or to observe other persons working as a means for gaining knowledge about careers. Volunteer and part-time community work opportunities are numerous, including such jobs as school patrols, money-raising for school or club, candy stripers, yardwork, and childcare.

   b. Seek out information about and examples of hands-on opportunities for learning in areas of interest to your child. Encourage and reassure him/her at appropriate times. Let your child examine and use tools of various trades and professions. Some schools have kits with tools used in different occupations. Many tools can be rented from businesses. Some libraries or other agencies have tools which may be borrowed.

   c. Put your child in touch with people working in areas of his/her interest.

7. There is a wealth of variety in the world of work.

   a. Help your child see examples of and discuss with him/her the fact that some jobs are primarily with people, others with data, and, still others, with things. Emphasize the importance of and dependence on all of these types of jobs. Assist him/her by providing experiences with and information about jobs in each of these categories. Seek the assistance of persons such as occupational specialists.

   b. Through visits, readings, discussions, etc., assist your child in understanding that finding an occupation suited to one's temperament is important for career satisfaction. For example, there are jobs with the following characteristics: variety/change, individual work, team work, risk-taking, requiring performance under stress, repetition. Since these exist within nearly any occupational cluster of interest to the child, they are important considerations in the career development process. Point out these characteristics in discussions of jobs with your child. Encourage him/her to think about these kinds of considerations.

*Career Awareness (CA) refers to the understanding of the characteristics of the World of Work that determine one's life career decisions.

CA includes the following abilities:

--to understand the variety and complexity of careers in the World of Work

--to identify the characteristics of the preparations for various careers

--to understand that"career" involves progressive stages of preparation

--to understand the relationship of one's career to one's lifestyle

The outcome of career awareness is career identity.

Attitudes and Appreciations*

1. The home has a significant influence on a child's occupational attitudes and appreciations, including an awareness of the necessity and importance of work as productive contribution both to individuals and society.

   a. Give your child work responsibilities at home as a means for helping him/her to understand how these efforts contribute to the family's welfare. As your child successfully performs in one task, he/she will be encouraged to find success in others as well. Typical examples of home tasks are: making beds; washing dishes; keeping own room straightened; helping with pets--feeding health care, training; and complete lawn care--mowing, trimming, fertilizing, watering, etc.

   b. Have family share times when everyone discusses the home as a workplace. Examples of appropriate topics include:

      (1) Are the jobs distributed fairly, considering available time, ability, and interests?

      (2) What is each person's best contribution to the family and in what ways could his/her influence be even greater?

      (3) How can performance standards be raised in regard to some (or all) of the jobs?

c. Serve as a model for your child by working as a volunteer in organizations related to your child's world, e.g. school, scouts, church, ball team, etc. In this way he/she can see how you are finding satisfaction in making a productive contribution.

2. By your own actions, you teach your child attitudes and behaviors concerning achievement and task orientation. These actions can either help or hinder your child in his/her career development.

   a. Talk with your child about your accomplishments in on-the-job activities or in hobbies or other leisure-time pursuits. Discuss the promotions received, as well as the times you failed to advance by not giving your best effort. Show him/her how you personally contributed to the improvement of a business product, process, or surroundings. Bring home awards, or better, take him/her to a banquet or other meeting (business, club, union or other organization) where you are honored for your achievement. Discuss newspaper clippings in your scrapbook or take your child to see the awards room or area at work, club, or other organization.

   b. Let the child see you making lists of things to be done during your leisure time at home and on the job. Work with him/her to develop concern for knowing what should be done, e.g. school assignments, home chores, leisure activities, cultural pursuits, and religious responsibilities of the day/week.

Evaluate from time to time to assess progress, need for improvement; give constructive criticisms and emphasize positive aspects of your child's behavior.

3. With wider career options now available to both men and women, as well as minorities, it is important that a child understand and appreciate the productive contributions of all people, regardless of the job or previous prejudices held toward certain groups of persons.

   a. Discuss with your child the workers you see both holding traditional jobs, as well as newly opened ones. For example, note the successful performance of women as school principals, doctors, and store managers; men as nurses and telephone operators; blacks and other minorities as retail workers and law officers. Help them to appreciate the productive, conscientious work of all persons.

   b. Be alert for articles, programs, and other means for expanding your child's information about and appreciation for newly opening occupations for both men and women.

*Attitudes and Appreciation (AA) refers to one's feelings towards the social and economic environment in relation to one's life roles.

The outcome of attitudes and appreciation is <u>self-social fulfillment</u>.

Self Awareness*

1. The self-concept of a child is formed by his/her interactions with others and their responses to his/her actions. Educational achievement and occupational choice are strongly influenced by the Child's self-concept.

   a. Since your child will act as you expect him/her to act, you can affect his/her self-appraisal and subsequent behavior by changing the expectations for your child. Within his/her abilities, identify areas where you know he/she can improve. Discuss these with your child. By way of illustration, instead of the usual "I knew you would leave a mess; you always do," change to "I am expecting you to clean up after you finish (throw away, sweep, put away)." Think of other ways in which you respond negatively to your child and change your expectations as well as what you say.

   b. Be sensitive to and accepting of the changing and temporary nature of both your child's self-image and his/her identification with a future occupation. Take pride in his/her aspirations and performance, however small.

2. Since self expression and self-understanding are essential to career development, your child should be permitted to discover and explore his/her potentialities and emotional resources as a means for better understanding of self.

a. Encourage your child, whether boy or girl, to express human emotions toward other family members and acquaintances--laugh, cry, show anger, gratitude, etc. If you feel a particular expression is unappropriate in a situation, say so, but suggest another behavior as more suitable. Also, talk with your child and/or observe him/her closely to understand the "why" of the behavior. Your own behavior may need to be changed if you wish a change in that of your child's.

b. Likewise, accept and be supportive if your child tends to be less demonstrative, more thinking, more introvertive.

The development of both types and combinations of each are essential for successful life and work.

3. Acceptance of your child as unique is vital to the development of self awareness and, ultimately, self-identity.

a. Tell your child, both in words and by your actions, that his/her interests, aptitudes and wishes are respected and accepted, even though they may vary somewhat from your own.

b. Talk with your child about how you were different from and similar to your parents, brothers and/or sisters, and other relatives. Encourage self appraisal of such things as: Do I like to do things alone more than with other people? Do I like to work

with ideas more than with things? Do other types of activities in which your child can gain self-understanding.

4. Finding satisfaction in both leisure-time and on-the-job activities is very important to the career development of the child.

   a. By being a model yourself, as well as using examples of familiar people, teach your child that people are most happy when doing the things they both like and are able to do best. Whenever, possible, encourage your child to talk with and observe other persons outside the home as a means for discovery of this principle.

   b. Guide your child by providing encouragement and support for his/her hobbies and potential leisure-time activities. Realize that whether these activities become a vocation or a complementary pursuit, this aspect of career development is significant.

   c. Encourage satisfaction by rewarding with praise and in other ways the completion of a job well-done, however small. Show pleasure in your child's taking pride in a job task. Also, express pleasure with your own success at home and on the job.

5. A child's image of his/her future role as a parent has important implications for his/her career development.

   Talk with your child concerning the type of parent he/she would like to become, realizing that success in home

roles is foundational to successful occupational choice and performance. Help him/her to refine and develop those characteristics and skills necessary to successful parenting and/or homemaking.

Seek to become a good model yourself, including expressing your own feelings; withholding judgement until all facts are in; taking pride in your work both at home and away. Talk positively about the things you do and the goals you have for personal improvement. Discuss problems facing you as a parent/homemaker, but only in the light of how they present challenges. Talk about problems you have overcome and about knowledge and skills needed by persons who expect to be successful as parent/homemaker.

*Self-awareness (SA) refers to the knowledge of self that will enable an individual to make career decisions.

SA includes the following abilities:

--to relate one's interests, aptitudes and achievement to the realization of one's career aspirations

--to understand and accept uniqueness of self, and past and future change

--to understand the relation of self to values

--to understand the importance of self-goals based on self-knowledge

The outcome of self-awareness is <u>self-identity</u>.

Decision Making*

1. Decision making ability, learned in part through having opportunities for making decisions, is essential to the career development of a child.

    a. Although you may be inclined to make decisions for your child, provide many opportunities for him/her to choose a course of action, given reasonable limits and "supervised liberty."

    b. Take time on these occasions--the more the better--to point out and teach him/her to identify various alternatives and possible/probable consequences of each before making a decision. For example, if the topic is use of your child's allowance, three possible alternatives to be considered are:

        (1) Should I spend it all now?
        (2) Should I spend some, save some?
        (3) Should I spend nothing now and shop around more?

2. Since basic attitudes concerning earning and spending money are formed in the home during the elementary years, this topic provides many opportunities for learning about the decision-making process, as well as economics.

    a. A family should involve its members in making some major decisions, particularly those affecting all or most members--trips,

major purposes, voluntary moves, etc. Members should look at alternatives, supporting reasons and information, and the order of importance of alternatives as they seek to make a decision.

b. Discuss with your child and let him/her observe, whenever possible, the decision-making processes concerning money and other matters in government, voluntary organizations, and at work, especially in those areas in which you are personally involved.

3. There are many reasons behind any person's decisions--real or imagined liabilities or capabilities, values and views, information (or lack of information), experiences, fears, likes or dislikes. Understanding these will help a child in understanding his/her own and other's decision-making actions.

   a. Discuss with your child decisions about to be made, as well as those already made to see how they are/were influenced by these factors. Some illustrations of typical questions are:

      (1) Did you decide to join the team because you thought you were strong enough or because we valued your joining it?

      (2) Did you choose not to go on the canoe trip because you were afraid, because you were unable

to row with your sore arm, or because you don't enjoy canoeing?

b. As occations arise, note and discuss the consequences of decisions made without the decision-making process or on the basis of fear or for other reasons. Analyze how the result could have been much better had the decision been made differently and on a more sound basis. Many types of games are available at your favorite department store. Purchase them for your child, but become involved yourself. Talk with him/her about decision making as you play. Involve the whole family, when appropriate.

4. Simulated experiences, such as games, can also be helpful as motivational and developmental tools for young people.

   a. Purchase and use games such as Careers as a means for helping your child to look at career and educational options, consider alternatives, and make decisions (even wrong ones) without suffering loss of time, energy, and money, as would result from real decisions made in error.

   b. Other games, such as checkers and chess, enable your child develop habits of looking at consequences of alternatives as necessary to decision making. Play these and other types of games with your child.

*Decision Making (DM) refers to the skill of applying one's knowledge to a rational process of career choice.

DM includes the following abilities:

--to relate career goals to the process of making career decisions
--to identify, gather, and apply information
--to identify and select alternatives, and to use them in making decisions

The outcome of decision making is career decisions.

Economic Awareness*

1. A child needs to develop an awareness that all the goods and services available to him/her are possible only through the cooperative efforts of many workers.

   a. Use questions which arise naturally to explain the necessity of work and cooperation of many persons. Typical questions include: Where do we get our bread? How does the store get its vegetables and fruits? Assist your child in finding the information in books or by asking the right person(s). Also try to stimulate thinking by answering questions with questions, such as: What do you think? How do you think we could find the answer?

   b. Increase your child's knowledge of marketing and distribution by (1) taking him/her to the grocery store (watch unloading of products, restocking etc) and (2) playing games on trips, such as counting trucks of certain types, locating particular types of billboards, etc.

   c. As the moments of interest come, discuss with your child the importance of the cooperative efforts of public servants and others to the operation of the home. For example, utilities workers, law officers, letter carriers, and others are all working for us.

d. As opportunities arise, follow the interest of, or arouse interest in, your child for viewing an entire process, such as manufacturing (from raw materials to store) or farming (farm to table). Note the many roles people fill and the cooperation necessary for these processes.

2. A child needs hands-on work experience with business and work projects to aid in his/her career development. The home work place is an ideal environment for setting up small business enterprises or creating work projects to develop needed or wanted items.

   a. Small home-operated businesses can be effective in increasing a child's awareness of the business world. Assist your child by supporting his/her interest in engaging in businesses such as: newspaper route, lawn cutting, childcare, door-to-door selling, lemonade stand, etc.

   b. Family projects in which a child has a part (from planning stage to finished product) are important activities. Follow up on recent requests from your child or be alert for others which will be made.

4. An important personal facet of economic awareness is the child's experience with and, hence, understanding of the uses of money and related topics, such as comparison shopping, budgeting, checking and saving, credit, and insurance.

   a. Parents can aid their child by openly discussing money as a medium of exchange, providing allowances, and when possible and desirable, enabling him/her to earn money by working extra at home and in the neighborhood. Look for many opportunities for discussing these topics and making application to your child's life.

   b. A child's questions about why he/she can or cannot have money from parents provide excellent opportunities for informing him/her about the family budget and the many uses which are made of the money earned by the parents. Consider converting your weekly income to dollars (or other denominations and, then, showing your child how much goes for each expense (utilities, house, insurance, car, etc).

4. Children need an awareness of the impact of occupational choice on their personal economics and, hence, on their lifestyle.

   Use car trips, visits, etc. to show your child how people with varying types of jobs live--both in economics of time and effort, as well as money. He/she should be assisted in understanding that many high paying jobs are extremely demanding in many factors such as time, stress, and separation from friends and family. On the other hand, he/she should see that lower paying jobs

may have some of these features, but may be more or less desirable, depending on the values held by the person.

*Economic Awareness (EcA) refers to the perception of the relationship of the economic process in the environment to one's life career decisions.

EcA includes the following abilities:

--to relate one's career roles to one's life style and personal economics

--to recognize the social and economic benefits of careers

--to recognize non-occupational means of acquiring wealth

The outcome of economic awareness is Economic Understanding.

Education Awareness*

1. A major factor in assuring a child's desire to achieve is a clear understanding that it is realistically possible to reach his/her educational or vocational goal.

   a. Talk with your child about occupational areas of interest to him/her. Discuss the opportunities at varying levels of training, e.g. in the health field: doctor, physician assistant, nurse, lab technician, teacher, medical secretary, orderly. Arrange for your child to work in a job as volunteer with these persons and/or talk with one or more of them to provide awareness of the careers and their educational requirements.

   b. If you or someone you know has advanced by education and experience in a field of interest to your child, share this with him/her as a means for showing a possible route to one's occupational goal. Discuss other routes of reaching one's educational goal(s), e.g. continuous schooling via loans and scholarships, night school, on-the-job training, and correspondence courses.

   c. Secure current literature from your public library, school, or from professional organizations about areas of interest to your child. Discuss educational requirements as a means for making him/her aware of the necessity of education for reaching

an occupational goal. This information should be related to your child's own interests and successes in school.

2. During the tentative or exploration stage of career development (age 15 and beyond) students become increasingly aware of occupations in greater detail, such as educational requirements and opportunities for further learning and advancement.

   a. If your child has expressed some interest in one or more occupational areas or a specific career, assist him/her in obtaining detailed information from school counselors, occupational specialists, librarians, and from these persons known and, preferably, respected by your child.

   b. Begin a self-learning program by reading these and other materials as a source of current information for sharing with your child at appropriate times. Your public library has lists of professional organizations offering free occupational information.

   c. If your child is uncertain of his/her interests for any number of reasons, arrange to meet with the school counselor or occupational specialist to discuss interest inventories and aptitude tests available (also, the appropriate time when a child should take each--this is very important). Other possible sources of information are local psychologists and The American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C.

3. Parents can influence their child by being models of learning people and, thereby, reinforcing the work and study habits learned at school.

   a. Help your child relate his/her school learnings to your job(s) (paid and nonpaid). Capitalize on home work activities and questions raised by your child by using as examples things you do or by looking up information in encylcopedias or other books.

   b. Parents who take correspondence courses, night courses, or read at home to increase knowledge, are teaching their children the importance of education to career. Discuss some of these learnings with your child at suitable times. Show pictures and diagrams of things you are learning.

4. With jobs changing rapidly as they are, continued learning is of increasing importance to the career development process.

   Assist your child by sharing examples of interesting things you have learned on the job--new discoveries, inventions, new materials, and processes. Likewise, make a regular habit of encouraging your child to talk about his/her discoveries, activities, etc. at school, at play, and in part-time jobs.

*Educational Awareness (EdA) refers to the perception of the relationship of education to one's careers and life roles.

EdA refers to the following abilities:

--to understand that learning occurs both in and out of school

--to recognize that different careers need different kinds of educational preparation

--to recognize education as a primary means for achieving life goals

The outcome of Educational Awareness is Educational Identity.

Employability Skills*

1. In the home, the first workplace known by the child, interpersonal relationships, including the ability to communicate effectively, must be developed as a basis for getting along with others in one's career.

   a. Teach your child methods for avoiding power struggles by both using and teaching methods for resolving conflict. For example, some good techniques are: compromise, using the opinion of a disinterested party, or role playing** to gain insight into the views of the other side.

   b. Communications skills, so necessary to effective human relations, can be taught within the home. For example, teach your child to listen carefully, ask questions for clarity, and repeat his/her interpretation of the communication. Your child can learn most effectively from seeing these types of behaviors in practice daily in the home.

   c. Learning to listen for and follow directions, one necessary aspect of communications, is basic to employability in all careers. Teach this skill by giving your child opportunities for assembling models, cooking from recipes, giving directions orally and following oral directions given by others.

d. Freely admit to your child when you realize that you have used poor or wrong judgment in a situation, resulting in problems for him/her and other persons. Being a model in this way will teach your child to practice this behavior also.

2. Learning to work under authority, basic to employability, begins in the home setting.

   a. Your child should be given opportunities for both supervising and being supervised, both by you and by peers. Seek opportunities for assigning, on a rotating basis, work responsibilities, e.g. cleaning, yard work, etc. Discussions should be intermingled during which constructive praise, as well as criticism, are encouraged.

   b. Discuss, as opportunities arise, the different types of authority necessary to our society, such as parental authority, laws affecting the family, particularly your child, and laws affecting businesses.

**Role playing. Providing an opportunity for acting out the experiences of another person and/or demonstrating possible solutions to a conflict situation.

*Employability Skills (EmS) refers to the social and communication skills appropriate to career placement.

EmS includes the following abilities:

--the ability to understand the implications of working in independent, team, and supervised situations

--to relate one's interest and aptitude information to occupations

--basic work habits and attitudes necessary for entering occupations of one's interest.

The outcome of employability skills is career placement.

Beginning Competency*

1. As a basis for effectiveness as a worker, whatever the occupation, a child needs to develop certain competencies.

    a. By example and purposeful teaching, provide feedback to your child on standards concerning work he/she has done. It must include praise for effort and well-done aspects, but also suggestions for improving. Your child will be more accepting if you also evaluate your own work in this way and, occasionally, permit your child to do likewise.

    b. Other areas in which parents have potentially strong influence are: habits of promptness, accuracy (measuring, following guides, and directions) and completeness (seeing a job through to the end, rather than leaving it uncompleted except for good reason). Examples combining accuracy and completeness are sewing and carpentry projects (responsibility for materials, cutting and sewing according to directions, and clean up of work area. Being a model of these characteristics is an effective way for teaching them, but parents would also do well to discuss these characteristics with their child and, as appropriate, work toward establishing or improving these behaviors.

*Beginning Competency (BC) refers to both awareness and acquisition of the skills necessary in the performance of tasks related to one's career.

BC includes the ability to identify the tools required for tasks in business, industry, and commerce.

The outcome of beginning competency is employment skills.

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CE 008 318